



Testimony to the Human Services Committee

Presented by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

February 14, 2013

Regarding Senate Bill 852, An Act Concerning Nursing Home Oversight and Community-based Placement

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the president of LeadingAge Connecticut, a membership organization representing over one hundred and thirty mission-driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults throughout the continuum of long term care. Our membership includes forty-three skilled nursing facilities located across the state. Many of our member nursing facilities are part of larger continuums of care.

Our members are sponsored by religious, fraternal, community, and governmental organizations that are committed to providing quality care and services to their residents and clients. Our member organizations, many of which have served their communities for generations, are dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut, I would like to testify on **Senate Bill 852, An Act Concerning Nursing Home Oversight and Community-based Placement** and offer our assistance to you as you consider this bill.

The nursing home level of care is and will continue to be a vital aspect of the health care continuum and as such, we must ensure its financial viability. We do not object to the Nursing Home Financial Advisory Committee that is established in the underlying statute of this bill, nor do we object to the concept of improving upon the statute. We do, however, have some concerns and questions regarding the proposed language contained in the bill before you today.

Section 1: We are disappointed that our association's representation would be removed from the Nursing Home Financial Advisory Committee. It is important to ensure that there is a depth and diversity of expertise represented on the committee and we believe that our association could contribute to that expertise.

Section 2 (a): The statutory definition of nursing home facility used in this section includes residential care homes and therefore the residential care home level of care would need to be specifically excluded if the statute is not intended to include them.

Section 2(b): This section establishes a new process to monitor nursing home census, making the assumption that a three month period of low census may be reason for concern. The method of obtaining the bimonthly census figures is not specified and we

would not want it to be an onerous reporting process for the nursing homes. It also mandates specific reporting requirements that would be triggered by a period of low census and establishes the risk of significant penalties. The enactment of such a strict mandate and significant penalties does raise a level of concern.

Section 2 (c): This section authorizes the Department of Social Services to provide a copy of any report compiled pursuant to Section 2(b) to the Nursing Home Financial Advisory Committee, but Section 2(b) makes no mention of a report. Will these reports reference specific facilities by name? If so and the Committee will be looking at reports of compiled financial information of facilities identified by name, then confidentiality issues, competitive market concerns and potential conflicts of interest must be taken into consideration when reviewing this proposed new section of the statute.

We raise these questions and concerns to facilitate a discussion of all of the potential implications of the proposal before you. We might even suggest that the Nursing Home Financial Advisory Committee be convened as it is currently established in statute and allowed to consider these and other potential changes or improvements to the process before the statute is amended.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions.

**Mag Morelli, LeadingAge Connecticut, 1340 Worthington Ridge, Berlin, CT 06037
(860)828-2903 mmorelli@leadingagect.org**